

Disarmament Committee Background Statement

Procedural Reminder: *Delegates are reminded that at the PACMUN Conference, they are **not** expected to arrive with complete resolutions. Delegates are expected to prepare a policy statement that can be read in one minute and three solid operative clauses with which to caucus and kick-off debates. Resolutions are expected to emerge from the debates in the committees.*

TOPIC **MEXICAN DRUG WAR**
CHAIR **JACK SURPRENANT**

The Mexican Drug War is an ongoing conflict that has caused the death of thousands of people. In 2006, new President Felipe Calderon declared the war against drug lords to eliminate drug production, trafficking and combats between cartels. Violence in Mexico has spiked massively since the beginning of the war as battles between soldiers, cartels and their rivals occur. Civilians are caught in the war as cartels fight each other for territory. Cartels are not short on resources.



President Calderon decided to launch his assault in an attempt to stop organized crime from taking over the nation. Almost 46 billion dollars have been spent and 45,000 troops have been deployed to fight this war. The result is chaos: cartels launch counter attacks when drug lords are arrested or when government troops gain territory.



The death toll has reached 45,000 and the war has yet to reach its goal. The Mexican government has failed to lower the flow of drugs and level of violence. Marijuana and poppy plants have increased and 95% of the cocaine circulating in the United States originates in Mexico. Battles are fought over marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine smuggling routes to the United States.

In addition to the outbreak in violence, the reputation of Mexico's military is tainted. Human Rights Watch reported last month that there is tangible evidence that security forces, led by the military, can be held accountable for 39 disappearances, 24 extrajudicial killings, and 170 cases of torture.

In 2008, the US launched Plan Merida in support of Mexico's fight against drug trafficking. However the Caravan for Peace has demanded that the US suspend its plan and admits that its

drug policy has harmed Latin America. The United Nations has recommended that the president withdraw his military from the streets.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What should be done to limit the drug production specifically in Mexico?
- What are other countries doing to limit drug production and trafficking in their region?
- How can the Disarmament committee address the issue?
- Will stopping the war mean abandoning the objective?
- What is your government's opinion on the war on drugs?
- Should Mexico follow the UN's recommendation?

HELPFUL LINKS:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

<http://www.unodc.org>

CIA Central Intelligence Agency:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Information on Mexico:

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35749.htm>

Mexican drug war:

<http://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/passionateeyeshowcase/2010/mexicodrugwar/>

Plan Merida

<http://pressenza.com/npermalink/caravan-for-peace-demands-end-to-us-plan-merida>

Events during the Mexican Drug War

<http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war>

The Christian Science Monitor (article)

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0224/UN-Latin-America-undermining-drug-war-by-decriminalizing-drugs>

stopthedrugwar.org – Feature: UN, Western Nations Complicit in Drug Offender Executions, Report says

http://stopthedrugwar.org/chronicle/2010/jun/25/feature_un_western_nations_compl

The Christian Science Monitor (article) – UN questions Mexican Army's role in drug war

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0401/UN-questions-Mexican-Army-s-role-in-drug-war>

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TOPIC **ILLEGAL SMALL ARM DEALING IN COLOMBIA**
CHAIR **PAUL WILLEMS**

Colombia's black market thrives on the selling and buying of illegal small arms. Small arms are ideal because they are easy to move and can be imported and sold in large quantities. These arms include handguns, assault rifles, and surface-to-air missiles (SAM). Colombia is a hub for illegal arm dealers because of its geographical placement. With the borders touching Colombia there are tens of different routes possible. These go through Panama, Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela. They include air and sea routes into Colombia.

The illegal trading can be broken down into three main points: the users, the sources and the moving of the weapons.

The buyers of the illegal weapons include private citizens and activists, however, they are mostly bought by two Latin American guerillas groups: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FRAC) and Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). These groups have been buying these weapons to fight government troops. Normally they would buy their weapons in small shipments. Lately though, the FRAC have been buying in bulk; a sign that they are prepared to step up their attacks. It is most likely that the ELN will follow their lead.



Illegal weapons come from all over the world. Colombia is the center of illegal small arms dealing because of its geographical position. This land is the bridge between Central and Southern America, creating tens of routes for entering and exiting Colombia. Most illegal weapons come from Central America due to the stockpile created during the Cold War. Countries such as Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador have been a hot spot for small arms



dealers for years; thus, small arms are moved through Colombia. Panama is another enormous supplier due to the large amounts of shipments and its access to the world.



The moving of small arms occurs in three ways: air, land and sea. In Colombia, land is the most commonly used route. This happens because of the many borders and exit routes that Colombia has. Small arm dealers also like to move their loads by sea because of the neighboring country Panama. They use fishing vessels that carry them into port or are more elaborate; they establish drop off points and changing of ships. By air, dealers normally use small cargo planes, which can only carry one ton.

The trading of these arms have harmed and killed thousands of people. As a result, many countries have joined the fight against the illegal trading of small arms. The UN and Colombian effort to strengthen the borders is helping. The UN has passed many resolutions to solve the problems in Colombia. Still the trading and killing continues.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How should this conflict be solved?
- How can countries align their legislation with UN policy?
- What can countries do to improve the enforcement their arms trading laws?
- How should the FRAC and the ELN weapon supplies be confiscated?
- Which countries should be able to create small arms? Which should not?

HELPFUL LINKS:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

<http://www.unodc.org>

UN document on Colombia-

http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Colombia_Dec06_en.pdf

Document on Colombian small arms conflict-

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR1468.sum.pdf

Small arms trade in Latin America-

http://www.cdi.org/pdfs/Small_Arms_Latin_America.pdf

Information on Colombia

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41754.htm>